

**To:** OITA-EVERYONE[]  
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American Indian Environmental Office  
February 7th to February 11th, 2011

#### Recent Activity

National Tribal Caucus (NTC): The NTC monthly conference call was held on February 8, 2011. Discussions included: 1) OSWER's request for comments on the addition of a vapor intrusion component to the Hazard Ranking System used to evaluate sites for the National Priorities List; 2) an overview of the Tribal Science Council's new process to identify tribal science priorities in Indian country; and 3) a summary of the revisions to the Lead and Copper Rule by OGWDW. AIEO has confirmed the week of March 28, 2011 for the next NTC meeting. Location and other specifics will be provided as they are developed. [D. Jones]

United South & Eastern Tribes (USET), Natural Resources Committee: On Tuesday February 8, AIEO met with the USET Natural Resources Committee during their annual "Impact Week". USET nonprofit, inter-tribal organization based in Nashville, TN that represents 25 federally recognized tribes at the regional and national level. USET works to develop the governance capacity and cultural strength of tribes and to assist their membership work effectively on public policy issues. AIEO's presentation provided a general overview of EPA environmental programs and a summary of OITA-AIEO initiatives. [L.Jones, D. Jones]

#### Upcoming Meetings

EPA Region 10 Plans Scientific Assessment of Bristol Bay Watershed in Response to Tribes, Businesses and Others about Development Proposals: EPA will conduct a scientific assessment of the Bristol Bay watershed to better understand how future large-scale development projects may affect water quality and Bristol Bay's salmon fishery, an extraordinary salmon resource for the United States. EPA initiated this assessment in response to concerns from federally-recognized tribes and others who petitioned the agency in 2010 to assess any potential risks to the watershed.

"The Bristol Bay watershed is essential to the health, environment and economy of Alaska," said EPA Regional Administrator Dennis McLerran. "Gathering data and getting public input now, before development occurs, just makes sense. Doing this we can be assured that our future decisions are grounded in the best science and information and in touch with the needs of these communities. The assessment, which will focus primarily on the Nushagak and Kvichak watersheds, will be informed by scientific peer review, tribal consultation, federal and state agency participation, as well as public and industry input. We look forward to working with Alaskans to protect and preserve this valuable resource." [DiPietro]

New National EPA-Tribal Science Council Priorities: AIEO's Director Chase and the National EPA-Tribal Science Council have identified an initial set of issues, and have developed objectives and criteria to narrow and prioritize potential topics. Director Chase's letter invited Tribal Environmental Directors to provide their input as partners with EPA to finalize EPA's tribal science priorities. The six-month process will formally launch in January 2011 and be completed by July 2011. Submissions are due April 1, 2011. [Besougloff]